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**IN THE NATION** | Tom Wicker

STAT

# A Time to Get Mad

**N**o doubt fired up by the North Carolina barbecue he was eating during the interview, Michael Dukakis told Robin Toner of The New York Times that he finally was ready to slug it out with a "bankrupt" opponent who was relying on "disgraceful" tactics. It's about time.

Talking to Ms. Toner, the Governor sounded rather like that character in the movie "Network" who electrified the nation with the cry: "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore!"

Unfortunately for him, that's not how Mr. Dukakis usually has sounded in these last six weeks that have so nearly sunk his Presidential campaign. Not only would some of the promised flash and fire liven up his own wooden performance. A fighting candidate still could make an effective issue of the cheap and vituperative campaign George Bush has been waging, while nailing Mr. Bush for some of the weaknesses and deceptions that campaign has been concealing.

The forthcoming second debate is the best — and may be the last — opportunity for Mr. Dukakis to launch a fighting finish, throw his opponent on the defensive for a change, and campaign as forcefully as his party has a right to expect of him.

Why not, for one good example, stop apologizing because the American Civil Liberties Union has taken some positions Mr. Dukakis doesn't share? Hit back instead at George Bush for siding with Ed Meese in a know-nothing attack on an organization that fights for every American's freedom of speech, religion, assembly, political views and right to be let alone.

Why not, for another example, quit dodging the word "liberal" and tell

the voters forcefully that liberal government and liberal politicians brought this nation Social Security, Medicare, stock market regulation, Federal deposit insurance (are you listening, Texas?), rural electrification, the G.I. Bill of Rights that educated untold numbers of American men, federally supported mortgages on the houses most of us live in — and on and on. "Conservative" Reagan-Bush policies, in grim contrast, led to the wealthiest 40 percent of Americans receiving a record 67.8 percent of national family income in 1987. The poorest 40 percent had to get by with only 15.4 percent.

Why not point out in the second debate and in every speech thereafter

## How Dukakis can fight back at Bush.

that in the first debate George Bush espoused a policy that would label as criminals every one of the 15 million American women who have had abortions, not to mention those who will in the future? Mr. Bush's campaign manager had to persuade him otherwise — if, indeed, Mr. Bush even yet understands a position he said he had not "sorted out" before he announced it.

Don't leave unsubstantiated the charge that George Bush would "raid" the Social Security trust funds if elected. Point out that if Mr. Bush swears he'll never raise taxes, if he

can't cut interest on the Reagan-Bush debt, and if he won't cut the bloated Reagan-Bush national defense spending, the only sizable target for reducing the Reagan-Bush deficit is Medicare and Social Security. Moreover, the Reagan-Bush campaign promised in 1980 to protect Social Security, but the Reagan-Bush Administration tried to cut it in 1981; the same promise was made in 1984, but in 1985 both Senator Dan Quayle and Mr. Bush (to break a tie) voted to cut cost-of-living benefits.

Stop playing beanbag on national defense and remind Mr. Bush that he believed as late as 1980 that nuclear war was winnable. How? "You have a survivability of command in control ... of industrial potential, protection of a percentage of your citizens, and you have a capability that inflicts more damage on the opposition than it can inflict upon you," Mr. Bush told Robert Scheer of The Los Angeles Times. "That's the way you can have a winner." He didn't say what "percentage of your citizens" might survive.

Get tough on Mr. Bush's so-called "experience," too. Why should this nation do what it has never been asked to do before — elect a former director of the Central Intelligence Agency as President? Who knows what skeletons are in that closet? Director Bush specifically had some complicity in the continuance of General Noriega, the murderous drug kingpin, on the C.I.A. payroll; and any C.I.A. director could be subject to international blackmail for other repugnant activities. He certainly will be feared and disliked for his C.I.A. connection in that large part of the globe where the agency is a dirty word.